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AUTHOR Dummer, Gail M.; Windham, Geraldine M.
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ABSTRACT

This publication describes an inservice training program implemented in September 1979 in the Montgomery County Public Schools (Maryland) to help physical education teachers involved with mainstreamed handicapped students. Issues emphasized in planning the program were relevance, information, convenience, and feasibility of the workshop model. Two workshop goals were identified: (1) to increase the participants' comfort levels in their role with mainstreamed students; and (2) to provide strategies, materials, curricula, and alternatives for use with the students. Workshop content (including behavior management, information on student characteristics, and individualization) was identified by the inservice planning team, and the importance of using peer training and active learning in the inservice sessions was stressed. Evaluation and followup efforts indicated that the program was successful. Examples of workshop activities are given to illustrate the approach and the materials used. Features of the model that may require modification in other sites are considered, including composition of the inservice planning team, content of workshop sessions, and evaluation strategies. (CL)

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## MAINSTREAMING IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION:

## PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING AN INSERVICE TEACHER TRAINING ACTIVITY

Gail M. Dummer and Geraldine M. Windham

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## INTRODUCTION

> The laws impacting on education today are in danger of being put into practice in routine and unimaginative ways unless school systems respond to the challenge of implementation with dynamic teacher-training efforts.[1]

Laws affecting education mandate the change that must take place, the time frame in which it must occur, and the procedural safeguards related to compliance. P.L. 94-142 is a prime example of this type of legislation. For physical educators it has been landmark legislation in the attention it gives to the role physical education should play in the education of handicapped students. By implication, it also gives attention to the teacher's need for training.

Given the mandate of P.L. 94-142, how does a school system go about establishing its training goals for physical educators? It solicits the ideas of those who will be the recipients of the training, and organizes the training project around those suggestions. In September of 1979 Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), with a financial grant from the Maryland State Department of Education, implemented such a training program for its physical educators, and received high marks from the 175 participants and invited observers. A description of this project demonstrates the importance of responding to the ideas of both participants and planners.

## BEHIND THE SCENES: THE ADMINISTRATION OF AN INSERVICE TRAINING PROJECT

The visible part of a successful inservice effort is but the tip of an iceberg, beneath which lies layer upon layer of organizational management. The chronology of organization must be designed to serve, not stifle, the project. A chronology that would translate well to other situations may be found in the MCPS experience as described below:

1. Provision was made for preliminary study of pertinent legislation and teachers' instructional needs. Selected for this task initially was an informed teacher, willing to analyze, to solicit the reactions of other teachers, and to define points of concern. In the second stage of the study, five teachers worked intensively with personnel from the Human Relations Department in settings designed to enhance sensitivity to the human needs addressed by the law.

2. A preliminary plan, a proposal for training teachers to mainstream students into physical education, was submitted by the group of five teachers.

3. A person skilled in writing grant proposals was identified and assigned the task of translating the teachers' plan into a proposal.

4. The Maryland State Department of Education authorized a grant in the amount of $14,809.

5. The time frame for planning, conducting, and evaluating the inservice training was established.

6. A project coordinator was designated to attend to the administrative details of implementing the training project. Selected for this position was the teacher who made the initial study of the laws and teachers' needs. To fulfill her duties, she was released from her teaching duties for a half day for a period of four months. In this time she was to put plans into motion and to preside over the follow-up activities.

7. An inservice team was designated by the project coordinator, with the approval of the Coordinators of Physical Education, under whose jurisdiction the project was being developed. This inservice team, consisting of five teachers, represented elementary, junior high, senior high, and special school settings. Team members were periodically released from their teaching duties to consult with the project coordinator. These sessions included a consultant from the University of Maryland and selected personnel from the school system. The teachers were responsible for determining training content, for selecting appropriate delivery techniques, and for suggesting post-training evaluations.

8. The inservice team was given a week's summer assignment in which to coordinate plans for content delivery and evaluation. Individually, team members assumed responsibility for specific workshop sessions which they would later conduct. This responsibility included developing the content, suggesting an effective delivery mode, identifying appropriate resources, and collecting instructional materials. Collectively, team members reacted to individual plans and established a sequence and time frame for the workshop activities.

9. A training site was selected that would offer the facilities needed to implement all segments of the training program.

10. Principals were notified concerning selection of personnel for participation. Grant monies enabled MCPS to inservice one physical educator from each school in the system. Participants were selected on the basis of their expressed interest and their principal's recommendation. The selected participants from each school were given the designation of facilitators, with the responsibility of organizing follow-up activities and disseminating materials and information at their home schools.

11. Selected school officials were invited to lend their support to the training project and to make welcoming remarks each day that the sessions were in progress.

12. Materials necessary for full participation and ease of transition

from one training session to the next were packaged in a workshop booklet for distribution at opening sessions.

13. An introductory packet of materials and instructions was sent to each participant prior to the first session.

14. Invitations to attend were sent to physical educators in leadership positions in the State of Maryland.

15. The inservice team was released from regular teaching activities for one week so that they could lead assigned training sessions.

16. Participating teachers were inserviced in five groups of thirty, one group per day.

17. Ideas suggested by teachers during one of the workshop sessions were compiled and edited by the project coordinator. The ideas were published and widely disseminated in the form of a booklet, "Mainstreaming in Physical Education: Teacher Strategies."[2]

18. Participants were supplied with an additional packet of supplemental materials and resources.

19. Teachers were asked to evaluate the training experience.

20. Books, kits, beeper balls, etc. were ordered for teacher loan.

21. Follow-up activities were initiated and conducted by the project coordinator.

At the heart of every successful educational/training design is understanding--understanding of the goals, the learner's needs, and the climate and context within which a particular group of learners will commit themselves to achieving the desired goals. Too often sharp differences between teacher preparation and teacher inservicing are not clarified because they are not perceived as factors in developing a training climate for the teacher inservice. This lack of perception flaws the results of many projects.

## THE MCPS INSERVICE WORKSHOP: A FLEXIBLE MODEL

During the planning stages of the MCPS project, the inservice planning team debated the content, format, presenters, and evaluation facets of the actual training day. Although there was no immediate consensus on any of these issues, the team agreed that requisites for a successful inservice included:

- Relevancy. Participants in the workshop would need to perceive the training as relevant to their immediate teaching situations.[3,4] One tactic used to help ensure that training would be perceived as relevant was peer training. Presumably if participants learned about methods and strategies which were successfully implemented in schools like their own by teachers

like themselves, they would be more likely to use those methods and strategies in their own settings. Additionally, an effort was made to ensure that the content presented to elementary and secondary level teachers was varied appropriately to meet their instructional needs.

- Information. Prospective participants varied with respect to amount and nature of teaching experiences, amount and nature of previous course work, and personal interest and experience.[3,5,6,7] The planning team had no doubt that each teacher would expect information which would be new and useful to him or her. To accommodate this need, teachers were permitted to select two of five elective sessions which best met their instructional needs. In addition to two elective sessions, all teachers attended five basic informational sessions.

- Convenience. Consideration should be given to participants' personal needs to ensure willing participation.[8,9] To this end, grant money was used to secure paid substitutes for each participant. In addition, the training day was limited to the temporal confines of a normal school day, enabling coaches and teachers to meet after-school commitments. Lunch was also made available at the training site.

- Feasibility. Variables which influence the success of any workshop activity include the attitudes and background knowledges of participants and the number of hours available for training. The goals of inservice training activities must be established with these variables in mind. Active support of physical education supervisors and administrators, adequate funding, and ample planning time each increase the probability that workshop goals will be achieved.

These priorities were carefully considered in the formulation of the two workshop goals: to raise the comfort levels of participants with respect to their roles in mainstreaming mildly handicapped children; to provide teachers with strategies, materials, curricula, and alternatives which they could adapt or modify for immediate use in their own settings.

WORKSHOP CONTENT

The two workshop goals dictated the content of the training sessions. Efforts to raise teachers' comfort levels included the following:

- providing a profile of the characteristics and numbers of handicapped children who were mainstreamed into elementary and secondary settings in MCPS;

- presenting information about the characteristics of handicapped children;

- presenting information about state and federal laws which impact upon the physical education of handicapped children;

- acquainting participants with available personnel, printed media, and equipment resources available within MCPS.

The content of other workshop sessions was selected because it helped to achieve the goal of providing participants with strategies, materials, curricula, and alternatives for immediate use in the teaching situation. These sessions also addressed the goal of raising the comfort level, in that the selected topics were designed to help remediate previously identified teacher needs. These workshop sessions focused on the following concerns:

- managing problem behaviors in the physical education setting;
- identifying general strategies for mainstreaming any mildly handicapped child into elementary or secondary physical education classes, as well as identifying more specific strategies appropriate for mainstreaming children with specific handicapping conditions, e.g., hearing impairments;
- setting realistic expectations for the behavior of the handicapped student, and establishing standards for grading the performance of the handicapped student;
- promoting positive socialization and acceptance among handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers;
- understanding the physical educator's role in the referral, assessment, and evaluation components of the IEP process, as well as the physical educator's role in writing IEPs;
- individualizing learning activities designed to enhance perceptual-motor skills among all children, ranging from low-skilled elementary level students to high-skilled secondary level students.

Participants indicated their approval of the workshop goals and the content of workshop sessions by ranking all sessions as beneficial to highly beneficial on a post-workshop evaluation form. These results were not surprising in that workshop sessions were carefully orchestrated to meet identified teacher needs.

Delivery of the Workshop Content

Both practical experience and research findings dictated the various modes of delivery used for MCPS workshop sessions. Since it has been repeatedly demonstrated that the best learning environment is one in which the participant is an active learner, several sessions were specifically designed to maximize the participant's involvement. The research literature also leaves no doubt that peer training is among the most effective methods of inservice delivery; hence, most of the presenters were peers of the workshop participants. Evaluation of the workshop activities was designed according to a "management by objectives" scheme in an effort to obtain the most valid and reliable data on participant outcomes. Finally, follow-up activities were planned to help maintain teacher enthusiasm for improving physical education for the mainstreamed child and to help identify future teacher training needs in MCPS.

Active Learning

The active participatory, contributory, and sharing role of participants was emphasized as an approach to teacher training. This approach is consistent with findings reported in the research literature which demonstrate that the best learning environment is one in which the participant is an active learner.[3,4] In addition, placing teachers in an active sharing and contributory role was viewed as a method of enhancing the self-confidence of participants. In order to share and contribute, participants were forced to recognize and use talents and competencies already in their repertoires of teaching skills.[7,10]

To ensure that participants would become actively involved in assimilating the workshop content, six sessions involved a combination of participant sharing and contribution with the guidance of one or more team members. Small group organization increased the probability that each participant would contribute to the task of the group.

- In one session, teachers were asked to respond to prepared vignettes about handicapped children with proposed strategies for including those children in physical education classes. Each vignette included a list of priority goals for the student. Elementary school physical educators responded to vignettes about elementary-aged children; secondary level physical educators reacted to situations involving older students.

  A sample vignette follows: "Jane is an eight-year old second grade child classified as educationally mentally retarded. She is a reluctant learner who greatly fears failure. Jane is socially isolated. Jane's parents oppose any special placement. Jane is responsive to her teachers and her behavior is positive. Priority goals for regular program adjustment are to develop positive peer interactions, to improve self-image, and to improve hand-eye coordination."

  The strategies proposed to this vignette and nine others were compiled, edited, and published in a booklet which was later disseminated to all physical educators in MCPS.[1]

- Participants in a session on IEPs learned about the IEP process by first participating in a simulated IEP meeting and then completing those portions of a written IEP that physical educators in MCPS would typically complete.

  The simulated IEP meeting was effected by providing each workshop participant with a written statement which described the point of view of one of the participants in the IEP meeting. They were then asked to assume that role in an IEP meeting. The following sample statement describes a principal's views on mainstreaming a 14-year old boy with learning disabilities.

  "I've known the Lloyds for years. I remember when Henry Sr. just got his gas station and was working day and night to make it a business success. He's done a fine job establishing himself in business and giving his customers dependable and quality work for the money he charges. He really goes out of his way to please his customers. We are lucky to have a man

like Henry in our community. As for his son, Hank, many times I've seen him working by his father's side at the station, and I've never heard any complaints about the service at that station. It seems that Henry Sr. expects Hank to be better at fixing cars than he is, if that's possible. He seems to expect nothing less than perfection from his son, when it comes to cars. Maybe that's why Henry's business has been so prosperous over the years. I wonder if he demands that quality of work from the rest of his employees.

It's true that we have an excellent automotives curriculum here. Mr. Brown has built that program from scratch and has done a fine job. And, I really think that Hank would learn a lot and contribute a lot to the course. We might even be able to use Mr. Lloyd's garage during the school year. But, I did hear some concerns from the teachers at Sputnik about Hank being a behavior problem at times, especially when he gets frustrated. I'd love to make an exception for Hank and give him a chance; he seems like such a fine, polite boy; but we've got so many problems already here with vandalism and drugs. I'd hate for Hank to get into the wrong crowd and possibly mess up his chances for success in life. Yet my intuition says he'll do a fine job.

I know I need to comply with the provisions of P.L. 94-142 and provide Hank with the best educational environment for his needs, but I'm not sure that Skylab is the best place for him. If I start making exceptions for him based upon my intuition and gut feelings, I'll be making exceptions for others and setting precedents in the community. And I sure found out what rocking the boat meant a few years ago. I ended up having everyone from the superintendent to the head of the school board visiting my office that time. I'll never do that again. It seems that the head of the teacher's union has more power in this county than I do. All I need to do is step on one teacher's toe and I'd probably end up reliving that experience.

Even though having Hank enroll in our program seems like a good idea, I've got to watch overloading my teachers with more paper work, more time commitments, and possibly endangering the safety of other students. I sure hope that I don't have to make a final decision in this case."

- Teachers attending a session on behavior management strategies were asked to share successful and unsuccessful solutions to problem situations. The leaders of this session used these teacher-generated strategies as the bases for their presentations.

- The *"What If You Couldn't . . . ?"* materials were used to help teachers to simulate handicapping conditions.[15,16] After exposing participants to several different handicapping conditions, the session leader arranged an activity session which involved the integration of able-bodied and "simulated-handicapped" players. The players were asked to suggest modifications of the activity which would permit maximum participation by the handicapped students.

- In another session, participants learned about a series of perceptual-motor

stations which could be used collectively as a teaching/learning activity or as a means of assessing perceptual-motor skills. After a brief introduction to the session, teachers actually performed the required skills at each station. The teacher who had designed this circuit had outlined 20 to 30 levels of each skill, such that low-skilled elementary students would be able to successfully complete the lowest levels of each skill, and that high-skilled physical educators would be challenged by the highest levels of each task. Workshop participants left this session fully aware of the need to develop perceptual-motor skills among their students, including handicapped students.

- In a session on behavioral expectations and grading standards, teachers were asked to indicate the standards of behavior e.g., paying attention, effort, dressing appropriately, which they expect of non-handicapped children. These expectations served as a bases for discussion on appropriate behavioral standards for handicapped children. Similarly, teachers were asked to volunteer their criteria e.g., skill improvement, attendance, effort, for grading non-handicapped students. Discussions on grading criteria centered around this teacher-generated list and individual IEP goals and objectives.

Team leaders recognized that individual learners vary in their preferred learning modalities.[10,11] Since physical educators value physical activity as a learning modality, activity was used as a vehicle to teach workshop participants about handicapping conditions (the simulation described above) and about a model perceptual-motor curriculum (also described above). These were among the most popular and highly rated sessions.

Another attempt to ensure the active involvement of teachers in workshop sessions was to assign them the title and role of facilitator, along with specific responsibilities for fulfilling that role in their home schools.

- Facilitators were asked to report to their supervisors the numbers of handicapped students being served in the physical education program in regular physical education/mainstreamed settings, adapted physical education classes, individual physical education settings, physical education programs outside the school, or other settings.

- Facilitators were supplied with additional copies of workshop materials and were expected to share these materials and the knowledge gained during training with other physical educators, regular and special educators, health services personnel, and administrators in their home schools. In this respect, the facilitators could be viewed as resource persons in their home schools.

- Each facilitator was asked to identify problem areas, e.g., lack on input into the IEP process, teaching load, planning time, money, facilities, communication, in mainstreaming at his/her home school, and to communicate additional teacher training needs to the MCPS physical education coordinators.

The planning team reasoned that workshop participants would behave more

responsibly as learners knowing they would later be required to share information with others at their home schools. The planning team also felt that the facilitator role would encourage teachers to assume an active role in improving physical education services to handicapped children and in stimulating interdisciplinary communication and cooperation at their home schools long after the actual inservice training day.

The delivery modes for information presented at other sessions were selected as the most expedient ways of conveying content.

- Lecture presentations were employed in sessions concerned with state and federal laws, with the profile of the MCPS mainstreamed population, and with resources available to teachers.

- The *"Hello Everybody"* series of color filmstrips and audio cassettes[15] was used to provide information about handicapped children and their integration into the regular classroom. Separate filmstrips were available on visual impairments, hearing and speech impairments, developmental disabilities, orthopedic impairments, behavioral problems, and learning disabilities, so that workshop participants could choose the filmstrips most useful to them.

- A workshop booklet was developed which provided summary and supplementary information relative to each session. Copies were distributed to each workshop participant at the beginning of the training day.

Peer Training

Research findings consistently demonstrate that inservice training participants are more likely to perceive inservice training as relevant and are more likely to learn concepts and information presented in inservice sessions when workshops are conducted by their peers.[3,6,8,12,13,14] The MCPS project was truly conducted by peers of the participants.

The team's project coordinator was a junior high school teacher in MCPS with over 33 years of experience in teaching physical education at various grade levels and in various school settings. Five team members were active physical education teachers in MCPS. Collectively they represented elementary, junior high, senior high, and special school settings. Each of these teachers had a background in the provision of alternatives for handicapped students. Furthermore, the outside consultant to the project was also a physical educator with expertise in adapted physical education.

Adoption of the peer training concept resulted in some serendipitous outcomes. The leaders of each session were in effect models of attitudes and behaviors which participants were in the process of acquiring. In a very conscious use of modeling techniques, a team member who taught at the senior high school level and who was a varsity football coach developed and directed the session on perceptual-motor activities. His enthusiasm for these activities positively affected the attitudes of workshop participants, in particular those from secondary settings. In addition, use of the peer training concept proved both economical and effective.

Evaluation of Workshop Activities

Several types of evaluation tools were used to measure the success of the training project with respect to the original workshop goals and objectives.

- At the completion of each workshop day, teachers completed a workshop evaluation form which permitted them to rate each session on a five-point Likert Scale with respect to how beneficial the session was perceived to be.

- A pretest-posttest evaluation of knowledge and attitudes about mainstreaming was completed by participants one week prior to training and one week after training to measure changes in knowledge and attitudes.

- After meeting with their home school personnel, facilitators completed a form which detailed the number of handicapped students being served in regular, adapted, or individualized physical education settings, problem areas in mainstreaming handicapped students in physical education, and additional teacher training needs of staff in their home schools.

The results of the various evaluations indicated that the teacher training program was successful in meeting the overall workshop goals of increasing teachers' comfort levels and of providing teachers with strategies, materials, curricula, and alternatives for immediate use in the teaching situation. Some facilitators also reported more involvement by physical educators in the IEP process and more interdisciplinary cooperation.

Follow-up Efforts

Members of the workshop planning team were concerned from the outset that a single day of inservice training would be insufficient to meet the teacher training needs of physical educators in MCPS. Therefore the planning team designed several follow-up activities to supplement the one-day training session.

- Through the sharing of workshop materials, facilitators at each school site played a key role in continuing the teacher training initiated at the workshop sessions.

- To assist the facilitators in fulfilling their responsibilities, the team coordinator sent letters to all MCPS principals which described the purpose of the workshop and which requested their cooperation in providing quality physical education programs to handicapped students.

- The team coordinator also sent letters to facilitators which suggested ways in which they might share information with other school personnel, and which provided a list of identified handicapped students who attended the school.

- Other efforts at follow-up included the compilation and distribution of a booklet on teacher strategies for mainstreaming in physical education.[1]

- In addition, a package of specialized physical education equipment, e.g., beeper balls for the visually impaired films, kits, and printed resources were made available for loan to MCPS physical educators.

Although teachers indicated satisfaction with the initial teacher training effort and with these follow-up activities, the facilitators' reports suggest that additional inservice training may be needed in MCPS to address other teacher concerns and to maintain teacher enthusiasm for providing quality educational programs for handicapped students. As perceived by facilitators, major concerns which were not addressed or which were inadequately addressed by this inservice project were lack of input into the IEP process, excessive teacher loads, and inadequate teacher training for mainstreaming. Less frequently mentioned concerns were formal identification of students with special needs, money for instructional supplies and equipment, inadequate facilities, and lack of communication with special education teachers.

## ADAPTING THE MCPS TEACHER TRAINING MODEL FOR USE IN OTHER SETTINGS

Teachers in different school systems will vary in their teacher training needs. School systems within a state will vary in the size and characteristics of their teacher and student populations. Furthermore, teachers employed in different states will be subject to differing teacher certification requirements, which will in turn affect teacher preparation. Because of these differences, an exact replication of the MCPS inservice training activities will not adequately meet the teacher training needs of teachers in other school systems.

*Some features of the MCPS teacher training model must be adapted or modified to meet the specific inservice needs of teachers in any school system in which the model is implemented.* Among the features of the model which may require modification are the:

- composition of the inservice planning team;
- source and methods of securing grant monies or other financial assistance;
- duration, location, and scheduling of the inservice training day;
- content of the workshop sessions;
- methods of delivering the inservice content;
- strategies for evaluation of the teacher training outcomes;
- nature of follow-up activities.

*Other features of the MCPS model are invariant and should be considered as an integral part of any inservice training effort.* These considerations include:

- an organizational structure that will move and support the project from its conceptual stages to the final evaluations;
- a detailed analysis of teacher training needs which includes both the advice of experts and teacher input;
- content which is perceived as relevant by participants in the inservice workshop;
- content which provides the learner with an opportunity to improve his/her knowledge, attitudes, or experiential background;
- consideration of the participants' personal needs;
- consideration of the participants' current attitudes or comfort levels.

No project is without its imposed limitations. Educational budgets and teacher time are prime constraints that must be confronted when teacher training is at issue. These are restrictions, however, that can be modified by the extent and quality of planning that takes place and through administrative ingenuity in implementation.

FOOTNOTES

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[14]Zigarmi, P.; Betz, L.; and Jensen, D. "Teachers' Preferences in and Perceptions of In-service Education." Educational Leadership 34: 545-551.

[15]*Hello Everybody*. Color filmstrips and audio cassettes about handicapped children and their integration into the regular classroom. Handicaps presented include visual impairments, hearing and speech impairments,

developmental disabilities, orthopedic impairments, behavioral problems, and learning disabilities. James Stanfield Film Associates, P.O. Box 851, Pasadena, CA 91102.

16"*What If You Couldn't . . . ?*" An elementary school program about handicaps developed by the Children's Museum of Boston with WGBH Boston. A master kit with units concerning visual impairments, hearing impairments, emotional handicaps, learning disabilities, orthopedic impairments, and mental retardation. Selective Educati[illegible]Equipment, 3 Bridge Street, Newton, MA 02195.